

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 L-02 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IO-10 OMB-01

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R 041558Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7850

INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NI

SUBJECT: INDUSTRIAL UNREST CONTINUES WITH ARREARS

REF: LAGOS 1013

SUMMARY: LABOR UNREST CONTINUES TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT NATION, WITH UNION DEMANDS FOR ARREARS PAYMENTS AS FOCAL POINT OF COMPLAINTS. WORKERS MAY FEEL CONTINUED PRESSURE THROUGH STRIKE ACTIONS EVENTUALLY WILL FORCE FMG TO COVER FINANCIAL BURDEN OF ARREARS PAYMENTS ON PRIVATE FIRMS. END SUMMARY

1. DESPITE PLEAS FROM LABOUR COMMISSIONER ADEFOPE FOR INDUSTRIAL CALM (SEPTTEL). LABOR SCENE CONTINUES TO BOIL AS MORE COMPANIES IN PRIVATE SECTOR ARE HIT BY STRIKES. NUMBER OF PLANTS IN IKEJA INDUSTRIAL AREA OF LAGOS WERE STRUCK FEBRUARY 3, INCLUDING BREWERIES, TEXTILE MILLS, PACKING COMPANIES, HOTELS AND SOME BANKS (AGAIN). REPORTS FROM CONSULATE KADUNA INDICATE UNREST HAS ALSO HIT HARD IN A NUMBER OF INDUSTRIES THERE AND IN OTHER CITIES IN NORTH.

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2. PRIMARY CAUSE OF WALKOUTS HAS BEEN FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS TO RESOLVE QUESTION OF ARREARS. MOST COMPANIES APPARENTLY REFUSE TO MAKE MORE THAN TOKEN ARREARS PAYMENTS, WHILE UNIONS DEMANDING MINIMUM OF NINE MONTHS TO MATCH PUBLIC SECTOR. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE AT LEAST ONE COMPANY (IN ILORIN) HAS CLOSED BECAUSE OF INABILITY TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE, AND ANOTHER COMPANY HAS BEEN TOLD BY ITS WORKERS THAT THEY WILL ACCEPT CLOSING OF FIRM RATHER THAN SETTLE FOR LESS THAN FULL NINE MONTHS'S ARREARS.

3. COMMENT: QUESTION OF ARREARS CLEARLY REMAINS MAJOR OBSTACLE TO MOST PRIVATE SECTOR SETTLEMENTS. THOUGH ONE FMG SPOKESMAN HAS SEEMINGLY RULED OUT GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO COVER ARREARS PAYMENTS IN PRIVATE SECTOR (SEPTTEL), UNIONS MAY BELIEVE FMG EVENTUALLY WILL BE FORCED TO COME TO RESCUE OF FAILING PRIVATE FIRMS IF STRIKE PRESSURE IS MAINTAINED.
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